

NAVFAC QUICK HITTER NOTICE

Tree Trimming Fatal Mishap



SUMMARY: Two service contractor employees engaged in tree trimming were injured (one serious & one fatal). One employee (trimmer) positioned in a bucket truck Aerial Work Platform (AWP) for reasons unknown, left the bucket but remained tethered to the bucket and simultaneously to the tree with a PFAS (Personal Fall Arrest System). At some point the boom started to independently move pulling the tree trimmer and the top of the tree with it. At this time a second employee attempted to control the boom from an alternative bucket truck operator control station (located 5' above the ground). As he attempted to stop the boom arm's movement, which at this point had caused the palm tree to bend to 45 degrees, the tree snapped (tree reportedly not rotten/unstable) striking the employee at the bucket control station in the head causing death.

Activity: Tree Trimming

Potential Contributing Causes:

Right tool: Boom may not have been long enough to elevate the worker without having to leave the bucket – AHA ORM evaluation.

Loss of boom control - inaccessible when employee left bucket.

EM 385: 21.J.04 - Lanyards used with restraint system shall be sufficiently short to prohibit climbing out of the platform.

21.J.05 - Tying off to an adjacent pole or structure is not permitted unless a safe device for 100% tie off is used for the transfer

Communication Points:

KNOW operational rules associated with bucket truck AWP.



Photo represents similar equipment

What can go wrong?

What can I do about it?

If I can't do anything about it, whom do I tell?